

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

TO: THE CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

COUNCIL MEETING DATE  
APRIL 18, 1990

SUBJECT: RECEIVE SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS REPORT

PREPARED BY: Assistant City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The City Council receive the Unmet Transit Needs Analysis and Determination for Fiscal Year 1990-91 published by the San Joaquin County Council of Governments (COG).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Pursuant to law, the San Joaquin County Council of Governments (COG) must identify unmet transit needs in the County. COG must ensure that reasonable needs are met before "TDA" funds are allocated for non-transit purposes.


COG staff **recommends** no findings of unmet transit needs solely within the jurisdiction of the City of Lodi.

COG staff did find an **unmet** transit need within the jurisdictions of the County and cities of San Joaquin for inter-city service. However, this need is not deemed reasonable to meet at this time.

COG further found an unmet transit need at the Freeway Mobile Home Park and recommends the County contract with the City to meet this need.

I have attached the salient pages from the **subject** report.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jerry L. Glenn  
Assistant City Manager

JLG:br

Attachment

### 3. Expand service hours to 9am-5pm

As a result of the above-mentioned survey of Escalon transit patrons, COG staff uncovered an additional potential transit need for longer service hours. Twenty percent of those responding to the survey stated their desire for transit service from 9am to 5pm rather than the current service from 10am to 3pm.

An analysis of the operating data for the Escalon PTS shows that the additional service hours could be provided at a cost less than the rural reasonableness standard, even if the system took on no additional riders as a result of the expanded service. However; COG staff is not convinced that the addition of three service hours would be in the best interest of both the transit system and its patrons. Discussions with Escalon PTS staff have revealed that expanded service hours would probably go unutilized, especially in light of the large time gaps during the day when fewer riders use the service. Therefore, COG staff recommends no finding of unmet transit need.

Although COG staff does not recommend a finding of unmet transit need for expanded service hours, COG recommends that the City of Escalon survey its riders to determine if additional morning service hours would not only be beneficial but also would be utilized,

### CONCLUSION:

There is an unmet transit need for Saturday local service, For the stated reasons, that need is not reasonable to meet at this time.

Please see the Intercity and Commuter Transit section for additional recommendations for unmet transit needs,

## II. LODI

The data available on the City of Lodi indicates relatively high concentrations of seniors (15.8% 65+ vs. county average of 11.3%) but much lower numbers of low income residents, Local residents are presently served by the Lodi Dial-A-Ride. The vehicles, five full-size station wagons, two mini-vans, and a wheelchair-accessible van, are owned by the City and operated by the local taxi company. Saturday Dial-A-Ride service was implemented during the summer of 1985. The system now operates six days per week.

The general public Dial-A-Ride fare was lowered during 1985 to encourage ridership. Several diesel powered taxis were replaced with more reliable gasoline powered vehicles, and the fleet was

expanded by one vehicle. Late last year, **the two** mini-vans were added and one of the other vehicles was retired. In addition, the City **acquired** the wheelchair-accessible van in Fall 1989.

On time performance has improved significantly since last year's **Unmet** Transit Needs hearing. Last year, **78%** of all riders were picked up **within the system's** waiting time goal of no longer than **45 minutes**. This year, the percentage of people picked up on **time** approached **90%**.

From July 1988 to June 1989, **the system served** 73,115 riders.

### **POTENTIAL NEEDS**

Table 12 identified 6 potential **unmet** transit needs for the Lodi area, for the period 1988-92:

1. Intercity service to Stockton
2. Sunday service
3. Evening **service**
4. slow **response** times
5. Increased publicity
6. **Wheelchair service**

### **Discussion**

#### **1. Intercity service to Stockton**

- **This** potential need has been discussed in the COG Transit Development Plan, The 1988 Regional Transportation Plan Update, and the **Lodi Five Year Transit Plan**.

It is the position of the City of Lodi that the concept of intercity transit is good, but it will not be funded with LTF or STA funds allocated to **Lodi**. *The* new owners of *the* Lodi Taxi Company which provides the DAR service under contract to the City are interested in providing intercity service to **Stockton**. However, it **must** be done on a fully self supporting basis.

**The** COG staff partially agrees with the reasoning of the City of Lodi in that no one jurisdiction should be the sole source of funds for an intercity network and recommends no unmet need finding for the City of Lodi for intercity transit.

Please refer to the Countywide Intercity Transit section immediately proceeding the Evaluation section of this document for a full discussion of intercity transit needs.

#### **2. Sunday Service**

The City of Lodi is committed to meeting the reasonable transit needs of all City residents. The City feels that

the requests for Sunday service go beyond basic needs. The City is not prepared to transport the large number of passengers who might be expected to request travel to religious services -it is felt this function is properly the responsibility of the churches and their congregations, The COG's adopted definition of "unmet transit need" does not specifically mention transportation to religious services.

3.

In 1987, COG staff evaluated evening services' potential ridership using City of Lodi's generated data on existing ridership in the early evening hours and found that usage drops significantly after 5:00 p.m. from a peak of 42 between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. to 1 between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. The last call of the day was usually at 6:30 p.m. In view of the costs associated with renegotiating a contract, COG Staff believes that City Cab's unsubsidized operation can best meet the limited demand that presently exists past 7:00 p.m.

There is no indication that evening Dial-A-Ride service is essential to meet unmet needs in view of the 12 hour six-day-per-week service that is presently provided. In view of the ridership patterns indicated on the study it might even be argued that the City could shorten its service hours in favor of placing more vehicles on the street during peak hours. COG staff therefore supports the City's decision not to pursue this issue further.

#### 4. Slow Response Time

On-time performance is no longer considered to be a major problem. With the acquisition of additional vehicles, including a wheelchair-accessible van, the City is currently meeting its standard of 90% of its patrons picked up within 45 minutes.

#### 5. Increased Publicity for Service

It is the belief of COG staff that advertising and rider education, while highly desirable, cannot be considered to be an unmet need within the adopted definition. Nevertheless, COG staff would encourage the City to improve advertising particularly in light of the fact that this item has appeared for Lodi for the past four years. COG staff would also encourage efforts to better inform riders of the rules of the system.

#### 6. Wheelchair Equipped Van

Wheelchair equipped service for handicapped riders not able to use existing taxis has been requested periodically by social service agencies in Lodi over the years. Drivers assisted riders from wheelchairs into the cab, then place the

chair in the cargo portion of the vehicle. This is a high risk procedure for the City, for the cab company and for the patron compared to the use of a handicapped accessible vehicle.

Because of the sufficient numbers of wheelchair-bound residents within Lodi, the city recently acquired a wheelchair-accessible van. A previously unmet transit need that is reasonable to meet has been fulfilled.

#### CURRENT INPUT:

The following six items brought up at this year's Unmet Transit Needs hearing in Lodi on December 18, 1989, Some have already been discussed above under "Potential Needs."

1. Evening service to 9:00 p.m.
2. Slow response times
3. Intercity service to Stockton
4. Better advertise the rules of the system
5. Fixed route service
6. DAR service to the Freeway Mobile Home Park

#### Discussion

##### 1. Service extension to 9:00 p.m.

This item was discussed in the section above.

##### 20 Shorter waiting times

This item was discussed in the previous section,

##### 3. Intercity service to Stockton

This item was discussed in the previous section.

##### 4. Better advertise the rules of the system

This item was discussed in the previous section.

##### 5. Fixed route service

The possible need for fixed route scheduled transit service was highlighted by a petition calling for a fixed route system in 1985 and it has become a perennial item in the unmet needs analysis. The City's position is that fixed route transit is a method of service delivery, rather than a transit need. The City is reluctant to implement such a change because it may favor only a few individuals at the expense of the system as a whole.

COG staff believes that successful fixed route transit operation is possible in the City of Lodi. The large

population of seniors, the relatively compact pattern of settlement, the square grid street layout, and the conclusion of previous studies (specifically the 1981 Caltrans Fixed Route Study) all support **this** belief. While a fixed route system can be successful, this does not necessarily mean that a fixed route system should be immediately implemented,

The question of **timing** is important, **in** light of the success of the **Lodi** Dial-A-Ride,

In **informal discussions** with COG staff, Caltrans staff have cited the 40,000 population figure as a rough "**rule of thumb**" for **fixed route transit**. In other words, cities larger than 40,000 people are typically large enough to support fixed route **transit**. While not in disagreement with this concept, COG staff's research has revealed several cities with populations from 43,000 **ti** 83,000 which are successfully served only by demand responsive transit. In California, this includes the **Cities** of El Cajon, La Mesa, Corona, Arcadia, and La Mirada. Perhaps more to the point, one **document** reports that demand responsive transit "**has** been **considered** appropriate for areas with a population density of between 3,000 **and** 7,000 persons per square mile." The City of **Lodi** falls **in** the lower half of this range, with a population density of 4,500 people **per** square mile,

Rather than embrace, perhaps prematurely, a fixed route transit system, the City of **Lodi** desires to improve the Lodi Dial-A-Ride, COG staff continues to support this course of action as we have in previous Unmet Need findings.

6. **DAR service to the Freeway Mobile Home Park**

See the Evaluation section for the County of San Joaquin for a description of this request and recommended COG action.

**CONCLUSION:**

COG staff recommends no finding of unmet transit need solely within the jurisdiction of the City of **Lodi**.

Please see the Intercity and Commuter Transit section for recommendations on other unmet transit needs.

not be able to participate in the program due to lack to transportation,

In order to assess the potential need for special transportation to this program, COG staff spoke with staff of the Manteca Recreation Program. This discussion revealed that the City had offered special programs in Lathrop and French Camp in both of the last two years, but few parents signed up their children. As a result, the City had to cancel both programs for lack of interest. Because of this apparent lack of demand for the Manteca summer recreation program in French Camp, COG staff is reluctant to make a finding of unmet transit need for special transportation to this program.

### Larch Clover Community Center

There was a county sponsored public hearing at the Larch Clover Community Center, just outside of Tracy, on January 19, 1990, at which three comments were received.

1. Need general public intercity transit
2. Excessive service delays
3. Dirty taxis

### Discussion

#### 1. Need general public intercity transit

Please see the Countywide Intercity Transit section immediately following the Evaluation section for a full discussion of intercity transit needs.

#### 2. Excessive service delays

This complaint was apparently directed towards the Tracy provided services rather than the CAT service-

#### 3. Dirty vehicles

This complaint also was apparently directed towards the Tracy services.

### Woodbridge Municipal Advisory Council

A County sponsored public hearing was held at a meeting of the Woodbridge MAC on January 25, 1990. There were no comments received.

### City of Lodi--Sewice to the Freeway Mobile Home Park

Although the County did not sponsor an Unmet Transit Needs hearing for the City of Lodi, public comment generated in Lodi pertains directly to County-funded transit service.

The Freeway Mobile Home Park is located just south of the Lodi city limits adjacent to Highway 99 between Armstrong Road and Harney Lane. Of its 71 spaces and 8 apartments, approximately 602 are occupied by senior and disabled people, some of whom either do not have access to an automobile or can no longer drive because of age or ill health.

In October 1989, COG staff received a petition and several letters signed by residents of the mobile home park requesting Dial-a-Ride service into Lodi. In addition, several survey forms were submitted showing the potential demand for the service. Residents of the park would use the service primarily for medical appointments, although there is a need for shopping, business, and social trips. At the Lodi Unmet Needs hearings, City staff agreed that the Lodi DAR could adequately serve park residents as long as the County agreed to pay for the service.

Because of the mobile home park's proximity to the City of Lodi and the fact that a precedent for such service was set for the Acampo Mobile Home Park (which is located farther away from Lodi than is this park), COG staff can find no reason to determine this service request to be unreasonable. Therefore, staff makes a finding of unmet transit need in the jurisdiction of the County of San Joaquin that is reasonable to meet for Lodi DAR service to the Freeway Mobile Home Park. The County should enter into negotiations with the City of Lodi to implement the service as soon as possible.

## **CONCLUSION**

COG recommends a finding of unmet transit need within the jurisdiction of San Joaquin County for Lodi DAR service to the Freeway Mobile Home Park: furthermore, staff finds this need reasonable to meet.

Please see the Intercity and Commuter Transit section for recommendations on other unmet transit needs,

## **VI. STOCKTON**

The demographic data indicate that Stockton has extremely high potential transit needs. There are large concentrations of seniors and low-income people in the area, particularly in South Stockton. Studies have shown that age and income are highly correlated with automobile ownership and usage. The majority of non-drivers found in San Joaquin County reside in the Stockton area, based on data on Table 6. It is probable that a majority of the County's handicapped population reside in Stockton. This is borne out by the Table 8 data on numbers of public transit disabled.



## INTERCITY AND COMMUTER TRANSIT NEEDS

In almost every Unmet Transit Needs public hearing in the County, residents suggested the implementation of general public intercity service to supplement the E&H intercity service provided by County Area Transit. As ~~more~~ and more people must travel ~~between~~ the cities to obtain particular goods and services, the Council of ~~Governments'~~ ~~number~~ jurisdictions are ~~under~~ increasing pressure to provide intercity transit service for a variety of purposes, including medical, social, and business trips. In addition, air quality concerns have further elevated the importance of intercity transit services, since the County will be forced to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles in an attempt to mitigate air quality impacts.

This discussion of interjurisdictional transit' services will be completed in two parts. The first section will deal with intercity service within San Joaquin County, while the second section deals primarily with intercounty commuter transit service.

### Intercity Transit Service

Intercity transit service needs fall under the jurisdiction of the Council of ~~Governments~~ particularly where transportation-disadvantaged people need to travel between the cities to obtain essential goods and services. This is especially true in the outlying areas, where lower-income people and senior citizens have less access to essential government services such as welfare and medical facilities in the urban areas,

In 1987, the Stockton Metropolitan Transit District contracted with Crain & Associates to evaluate the potential for intercity transit service and make recommendations for implementation of such service. As part of the analysis, the consultant projected that intercity transit patronage could reach 2.7 million riders annually by 2010 under a high-growth scenario and that the Stockton-Lodi and Stockton-Manteca corridors would comprise about 2/3 of this projected demand. The consultant has also projected transit demand for outlying areas such as Ripon-Manteca and Escalon-Manteca, but these corridors would be much less traveled than the Lodi-Stockton-Manteca corridor,

Although the potential demand for intercity transit service exists, there are several institutional and financial roadblocks that limit the feasibility of providing the service:

Institutional factor. constraining service options

SMTD would be a prime candidate for supplying intercity service, but it is prohibited from providing service outside of its existing district boundaries through its enabling legislation. This legislation allows SMTD to collect property tax

revenue from property owners within district boundaries; therefore any service that is operated outside of the boundaries must either directly benefit district residents or be self-supporting. SMTD's latest 5-Year Transit Plan identifies several options by which the district can provide intercity service, including subscription bus service and privatization (contracting intercity service to a third party).

Other possibilities exist for implementing countywide intercity service. Given the County's existing service base, County Area Transit could be expanded to include general public intercity transit in addition to its E&H service. Consideration should also be given to the creation of a countywide transit district or agency to supply the service. While institutional constraints exist for these possibilities as well, they both are as feasible as SMTD.

#### **Local government limitations**

While local officials recognize the need for general public intercity service, their individual jurisdictions are reluctant to carry a large financial burden for the service. COG has supported the belief that no one jurisdiction should be the sole source of funds for an intercity network and has therefore never made any findings of unmet transit need for intercity service. The Stockton Metropolitan Transit District has been working on a joint powers agreement by which to fund the service, but this document is in its early stages. The County and cities of San Joaquin could enter into an agreement on their own, much like other counties/cities in California have done, but their ability to do so is limited by the possible scenarios described below.

#### **Inadequate funding**

As in most situations where a new service is contemplated, the available financial source is the limiting factor. According to Crain & Associates Countywide Transit Needs Analysis Study, LTF funds are the most promising source for funding intercity service. In the analysis, the consultant projected that a complete intercity network operated under SMTD would cost approximately \$1.8 million (1986 dollars) annually. Adjusted to 1990 dollars using a 5% inflation factor, this figure would be approximately \$2.2 million out of a countywide projected LTF apportionment of approximately \$10 million. However, there is widespread sentiment among local officials for preserving LTF monies for local services.

The next major alternative for intercity transit funding would be a dedicated sales tax increase such as that presently proposed for the County. A portion of the 1/2 percent sales tax increase could be designated for the provision of intercity transit service. However, since the increase would

have to be approved by a majority of the San Joaquin County voters, this potential funding source is uncertain at this time.

Another potential financial resource is the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund. This fund, like LTF, is allocated by the State from a portion of the state sales tax revenues. However, STA monies may be removed from the budget by the Governor. For several years, the Governor has eliminated these funds from the state budget: however, STA money may again become available if California voters approve Proposition 111 (SCA 1) in June 1990. Also, a new governor less likely to eliminate STA funding would help to increase this revenue source substantially.

### **Intercity transit demand**

While the Crain & Associates report shows a substantial demand for intercity service in 2010, there is precious little mentioned regarding current demand for what promises to be an expensive service. According to the COG's definition of "reasonable to meet", the average cost per passenger for intercity service must be comparable to similar service in other areas; if countywide intercity service is classified as a rural system, the reasonableness standard would be \$8.16 per passenger. Given this standard, ridership demand for intercity service would have to exceed 250,000 passengers annually for this service to be considered reasonable to meet. To date, there has been no information provided to show whether or not this minimum could be achieved. Without such information, COG staff cannot find intercity transit service needs to be reasonable to meet.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

COG staff recommends a finding of unmet transit need within the jurisdictions of the County and cities of San Joaquin for intercity service. However, this need is not deemed reasonable to meet at this time for the following reason:

Although potential 2010 demand for intercity transit service would certainly justify the provision of the service, estimates of current demand are nebulous at best. There are currently no strong methods by which to determine current ridership demand for an intercity service; lack of supporting evidence calls into question the reasonableness of providing intercity transit. COG staff recommends that a study be undertaken to determine the demand for this service. If the study shows sufficient demand, then the potential need and reasonableness issue should be re-evaluated.

It appears that intercity transit is a public service option that is in San Joaquin's near future. Unmet needs hearings have

recognized a growing call for this transit option, and the result is staff's recommendation to find an unmet transit need. At the same time, staff is not in a position to describe how well the service would be utilized and what the best means for service delivery and financial obligations would be. There are too many outstanding questions for staff to even consider a finding of reasonableness. Staff believes, however, that this places an obligation on the planning process to answer these questions.

### Commuter Transit

Although not considered transit dependent under COG's adopted definition, the County's commuting population and their transit needs must be addressed. The population figures in Tables 3 and 4 show that much of the growth is located in the southern portion of San Joaquin County, where commuters can take advantage of direct commute links into the Bay Area (specifically I-5, I-580, I-205, and SR 120). Employment projections show that greater than 40% of new Manteca residents and 60% of new Tracy residents will be commuters over the Altamont. However, there are few transportation alternatives to the use of private vehicles.

As the number of San Joaquin County residents commuting over the Altamont increases, the congestion on the already crowded I-205 corridor will increase, thereby worsening an almost intolerable air quality problem. While the individual cities are developing possible solutions to the air quality issue, there should be some coordinated effort to remove single-occupant vehicles from the highways. As more and more pressure is placed on San Joaquin County and the local jurisdictions to meet the requirements of the California Clean Air Act, viable alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle, including increased ridesharing, intercity transit, and transit over the Altamont, will need to be implemented,

Commuter transit in San Joaquin County faces the same institutional and financial problems as intercity transit does. Again, SMTD is willing to provide commuter transit both within the County and over the Altamont, but the District's enabling legislation limits its activities. SXTD has been successful at implementing a commuter service from Stockton to the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, with a future stop in Tracy, but only because the service is described as self-supporting (100% farebox recovery ratio or supported by the local jurisdictions) and because the service originates and ends within the District. Any additional service outside of the District's boundaries would have to be self-supporting as well.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Because commuters within San Joaquin County are, by the COG's definition, not transportation-disadvantaged (they have jobs and most have access to a private automobile), COG staff cannot make

any finding of **unmet** transit need for commuter transit. However, given the State's air quality attainment goals and the lack of funding for additional highway capacity-enhancement projects, COG recommends that its member jurisdictions work together to provide alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle. COG staff also recommends a review of the existing transit needs definition to investigate its adequacy in view of the growing commuter population and the demands for improved air quality.

